

THE  
PIOUS VOTARY  
AND  
PRUDENT TRAVELLER:

CHARACTERIZED

In a Farewell-SERMON, occasioned by  
the voyage of *Nathanael Wych* Esq.  
President to the *East-Indies*.

Preached in *S. Dionys Back-Church*, Mar. 14. 1657.

By *NATH: HARDY*, Minister of the Word,  
and Preacher to that Parish.

PSAL. 76. II.

*Vow and pay to the Lord our God, let all that be round about  
him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*

BERN. de modo bene vivendi, Serm. 62.

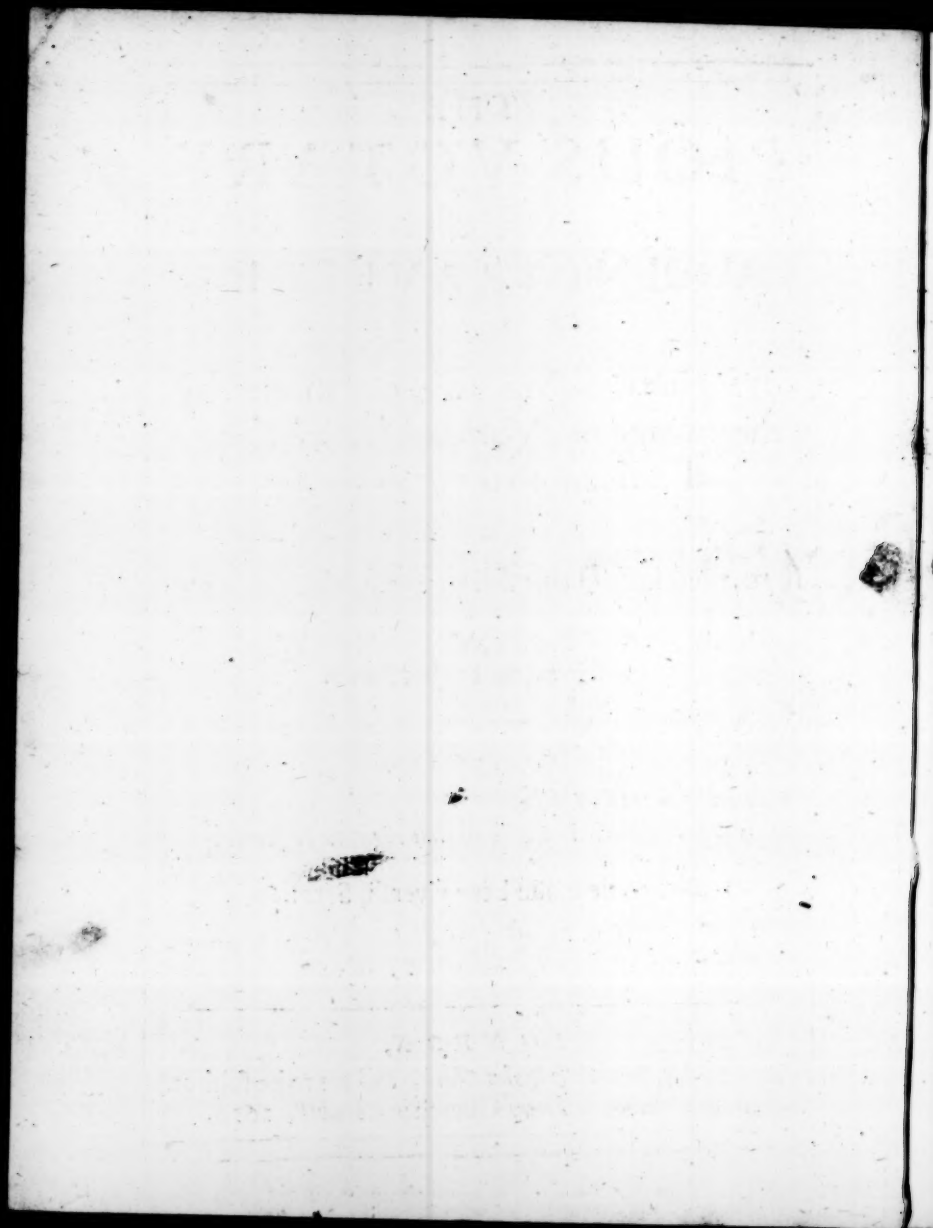
*Vos ipsos vovete & reddite; necesse est ut qui vovit etiam  
reddat, quia vovendi se debitorem fecit.*

L O N D O N,

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To my Honoured Friend  
**NATHAN AEL WYCH, Esq.**

Chosen *President* by the Honourable *English East-India Company*; Together with his Vertuous *LADY ANNE WYCH*, the *influence* of Heavens dew, the *affluence* of Earths fatness, and *confluence* of all good things which concern the *life that now is*, and *that which is to come*.

**D***id not the law of Thankfulness forbid me to deny what you are pleased to require, these imperfect Notes had not been made thus publick. But I had rather incur the censure of indiscretion than the brand of ingratitude; and if the perusal of this unpolished discourse may adde to your comfort, I shall be the lesse troubled, if the publication of it detract from my credit; especially considering that the concernment is very large; and as I pray it may, so I hope it will, be of good use and benefit to Merchants, Mariners, Souldiers, and all sort of Travellers, who shall think fit to make it their Vade mecum.*

*And now (worthy Friends) give me leave to congratulate your mutuall happinesse in that matrimoniall union whereof you have honoured me to be the instrument.*

*Yours (Noble Sir) in your dearly beloved Anne, whose name imports grace or favour, and in finding whom (according to Solomons assercion) you have obtained favour of the Lord; one who so fully retaliateth your love, that she saith to you as Ruth did to Naomi, Where thou go-*

*Arvas ab  
Heb. [?] gratias, benignus fut.  
Prov. 18. 21.  
Ruth 1. 16.*

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Gen. 2. 24.

est I will go, and where thou dwellest I will dwell ; *having learnt the just extent of that first Institution, which though it onely mentioneth the man, no lesse truly reacheth to the woman, who must leave Father and Mother and cleave to her Husband.*

*Nathanael  
compositum ex  
[N] dedit, &  
[N] Deus.*

*Yours (Honoured Madam) in your deservedly beloved Nathanael, whom I doubt not but (according to the signification of his name) you thankfully accept of as Gods gift ; One, who is the Third Brother of his Fathers house, upon whom the Honour hath been conferred, of being sent as Chief Officer into forraign parts about publick employments ; yea one whose singular dexterity and integrity rendred him no lesse acceptable to the Adventur rs, than his courteous affability doth to all who know him.*

*I have nothing more to adde but a Benediction : May she whom you have taken into your bosom, be a Leah for fruitfulness, as well as she is a Rachel for amiableness. May you do worthily in India, and by a zealous care of Gods Honour, together with a faithful discharge of your Trust, be famous both in India & England. May that good hand of Providence which hath joyned you together, bless and preserve you both at home and abroad, by sea and land, in your persons and relations, in your going forth and coming home. May you both live to return (as you go forth) with honor. May you bring home (what you cannot carry with you) an hopefull Progeny. In a word, may you live together long on Earth comfortably, and for ever in Heaven happily. So prayeth*

*Your most affectionate Friend  
and Servant,*

**Nath: Hardy.**





## THE PIOUS VOTARY.

GEN. 28. 20, 21.

*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, So that I come again to my fathers house in peace: Then shall the Lord be my God.*



Having a great Journey to go in a little time, I would not be long in setting out; and therefore lest I should be prevented (by the expiration of the hour) before I come to my Journeys end, I shall not detain my self-or you with an introductory Exordium.

The words are a part of *Jacobs Vow*, who is not unfitly called *Pater votorum*, the Father of Vows: This being the first Vow which we find upon Record in Sacred Writ. *Musc. in loc.*

That I may the better lead you into the several rooms of this excellent *Fabrick*, it will be needful to ascend by Three Steps, in the Resolution of Three Quæres.

1. What

1. What this meanes, that *Jacob vowed a vow, saying.*
2. To whom this vow was made. And
3. Upon what occasion.

Qu. 1.

In Answer to the first *Quare*, there are three things to be explained, what it means, that 1. *Jacob vowed*: 2. That he vowed, saying: 3. That he vowed a vow, saying.

Aquin. 2a. 2e.  
q. 88. art. 1.

1. *Jacob vowed.* To a Vow (saith *Aquinas*) there are three things required; *Deliberation, Purpose and Promise*: The promise must proceed from the purpose, and the purpose from *deliberation*. A Vow must be a *voluntary act*; which cannot be, unless some *deliberation* precede; it must be an *unfeigned act*, and that cannot be where there is no true *purpose*: Finally, it must be an *obliging act*, and this cannot be without a *promise*.

נרן vovit  
affine cum  
נרן fecit  
Spontaneum

If you please, we will reduce the three to two, namely, *A deliberate Intention*, and *A resolute Obtestation*; whereof the former brings on the latter, and the latter fast binds the former.

1. On the one hand, if a *deliberate intention* do not go before, either there will be no Vow made, or if made, it is not likely to be performed; nay though performed, it is no other than a *mocking* of him to whom it is made: A Promise without a Purpose being no other than an *illusion*.

2. On the other hand, Though the intention be never so real, yet if not seconded with a *Promise*, it is no Vow. In a Vow (as a *Casuit* well noteth) there is *voluntas seipsum obligandi*, a man doth will to binde himself to the performance of that which he vows, and that is not done by a bare *intention*, but an *obtestation*. Hence it is, that whereas a *purpose* may be altered, a *vow* cannot

Fil. u. 17. 26.  
6. 2.

not be recalled: So that when its here said, *Jacob vowed*, the meaning is, that *he did deliberately binde himself by promise, with an intention of performance.*

2. *He vowed, saying.* That in a *vow* use should be made of *words*, is not alwayes necessary, since *He* to whom the *Vow* is made understands the language of the *heart*: In which respect *Peter Lombards* definition of a *Vow* is somewhat *redundant*, where he saith, it is *testificatio quadam promissionis spontanea*, a certain testification of a voluntary promise, the *testification* being onely a *circumstance*, not *essential* to a *vow*. And accordingly, whereas its here exprest, *Jacob vowed a vow, saying*, it may very well be construed of *saying in his heart*; for so in holy Writ the *heart* is oft-times said to *speak*: Though yet withall we may interpret this *saying* in its most proper notion, as referring it to his *tongue*, with which he might utter this *Vow*. For (as *Aquinas* well observes) there is a *double* use of words in making *Vows*: Deus cordis auditor sicut & insp. flor. Tert. l. de orat. c. 13. P. Lomb. sent. 4. dist. 38. part. 4. Aquin. l. d.

1. The *one* is, when we are in *company*, that others may take notice and be *witnesses* of our *Vows*. Upon this account it is very fit for those who have been *notorious* sinners, being *penitent* on their *sick-beds*, to declare their *Vows* of *amendment* of life.

2. The *other* is, that even when we are *alone*, the *elevation* of the *voice* might make a deeper *impression* upon the *heart*, it being very evident in *experience*, that our *wandering* thoughts are kept in, and our *dull* affections quickned by *vocal* expressions. In which regard its not improbable, that *Jacob*, though for ought as we reade, *alone*, might *vow*, not onely *inwardly* in his heart, but *outwardly* with his mouth.

3. *He vowed a vow, saying.* It is not without some singular

singular *Emphasis* that this kinde of *phrase* is made use of. It is not said, He *made* a *vow*; but He *vowed* a *vow*. *Verbalia addita verbis augendi vim habent*, is a known Rule among the *Hebrews*; *verbal Nouns* being added to the *Verbs*, do much increase the *signification*. When we reade of *seeing visions*, and *dreaming dreams*, the *germination* intimates the *clearnesse* of their *visions*, and the *solidity* of their *dreams*. When *David* saith, He *found* in his heart to pray a prayer to God, it means doubtles far more than *saying* a prayer; to wit, the *sincerity* and *fervency* of his devotion: and therefore that *Hebraizing* Greek-phrase of *St. James* concerning *Elias*, *προσευχῇ πιστῇ ἐπε- γράμην* in the preceding verse, and is fitly rendred by our Translators, He *prayed earnestly*. In like manner this phrase of *vowing a vow*, implieth the doing it with *fulnesse* of deliberation, *freenesse* of consent, *earnestnesse* of desire, *solemnity* of engagement, *resolvednesse* of execution. *Vows* are not to be made rashly, but *considerately*; forcedly, but *freely*; slightly, but *seriously*; feignedly, but *cordially*; perfunctorily, but *solemnly*; waveringly, but *stedfastly*: In a word, not as it were in *jest*; but *earnest*, with a firm purpose of binding our selves by promise to the performance. To give you then a short, yet full *Paraphrase* upon these words, *Jacob vowed a vow, saying*; it amounts to this, that *Jacob* upon mature consideration, with a settled intention made a *solemn promise*, testifying it with *verbal expressions*. And so much shall suffice to have been spoken in answer to the first *Question*.

Qu. 2.

If in the next place you enquire, *To whom this vow was made*, though it be not expressed, yet it is plainly implied that it was to God; for of him he presently speaketh.

speaketh in the *third person*, *If God will be with me*; nay, in the close of the Vow he addresseth himself directly to God in the *second person*, *Of all that thou shalt give me* V. 21.  
*I will surely give the tenth to thee* : it was not to any of the *Angels* whom *Jacob* saw *ascending* and *descending* V. 12, 13.  
 upon the *Ladder*, but to the *Lord* who stood above it, to whom he vowed this Vow. *Religious vows are only to be made to God*: For this reason *David* calls them *Gods Vows*, where he saith, *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* Psal. 56. 12.  
 Upon this account it is, that *sacrifices* and *vows* are joyned together, in that prediction of the Prophet *Isaiah* Isa. 19. 21.  
 concerning the *Egyptians*, *They shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea they shall vow a vow unto the Lord*; vows being *Gods peculiar*, no less than *Sacrifices*. Suitable hereunto *Peter Lombard* saith, *A Vow is the testification of a* P. Lomb. l. d.  
*promise, quæ Deo fieri debet*, which ought to be made to God : and *Aquinas* positively affirms, that it is *Actus* Aquin. l. d.  
*latria*, an act of worship, yea of that worship which even the *Romanists* acknowledge to belong to *God alone*; the more is it to be wondred at, that they practise vowing unto the *Virgin Mary*, and to other *Saints* : But leaving them to their follies, it may suffice us, that there is no example in Holy Writ of any Religious Vow made by any godly man, to any other than the great *Iehovah*.

If once more you shall ask, *Upon what occasion Jacob* Qu. 3.  
*vowed this vow*, the Context will return the Answer; If you cast your eyes upon the beginning of the Chapter, you shall find *Isaac* calling *Jacob*, and blessing him, and V. 1, 2, 3.  
 enjoining him to go to *Padan-Aram*, that he might take a wife of the daughters of *Laban* : In obedience to his *Fathers* injunction *Jacob* taketh his journey, and being on his way, that he might the more effectually im-

plore Divine Aide, maketh a sacred and solemne vow.

All religious vows are of two sorts, either *ἐκλογαὶ* or *εὐχαριστικαὶ*, Vows of Prayer or Praise.

Jonah 1.16. 1. We read of the Mariners in *Jonah*, that when the storm was ceased, and the Sea calm, they offered sacrifice to the Lord, and made vows : and David, being delivered from death, and tears, and falling, resolveth, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. Thus our holy Mother the Church teacheth us, when we receive those dreadful Mysteries, and offer that sacrifice of Thanksgiving, by way of vow to present our selves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God. Indeed, vows of obedience and duty to be performed, are excellent testifications of Thankfulness for mercy already received.

See the English Liturgy in the prayer after the Communion.

Psal. 61.5. 2. The same word in the Greek *ἐκχὴ*, signifieth both a prayer and a vow ; and most usually vows are the attendants of our prayers : In which respect David saith, Thou, O God, hast heard my vows, meaning his prayers, which were accompanied with vows : More especially those prayers which are made either for obtaining of some eminent good, or for the removing of a present, or preventing an imminent evil, have still been fortified with Vows. *Jonah* being delivered from the Whale, mentions the paying of his vows, which he made, no doubt, when he cried unto God out of the Whales belly. David tells us of his vows which his lips uttered, and his mouth spake when he was in trouble. And here Jacob being on a perilous journey, maketh a prayer unto God in the form of a vow. It is a strong Argument when in the day of trouble we can plead with God not onely his promises of deliverance, but ours of obedience : No doubt David thought it so, when he prayeth, Lord remember David.

Psal. 66.14.  
Oratio per modum voti prolata. Par. in loc.

Psal. 132.1,2.

< and

and all his afflictions, how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed a vow unto the mighty God of Jacob. Great dangers feared, miseries felt, wants to be supplied, are just occasions not onely of fervent prayers, but solemn vows; and good reason, since vows are as it were the wings of prayer, by which she flies with swifter speed to heaven; and being there, they are as it were her Advocates to obtain a merciful audience with a gracious answer. St. Austin observes of *Annah*, that *Samuelem impetravit, quia cum poscerit, vorit*, she prevailed for a *Samuel*, because when she prayed, she vowed; and to the same purpose *Damascen*, *per orationem ac promissionem Samuelem procreavit*, she brought forth a Son by a prayer and a promise. Indeed, as our prayers manifest what we desire God should do for us, so our vows that we are willing to do for God: And no wonder if we then most prevalently incline God to mercy, when we most strongly engage our selves to duty.

Aug. Ep. ad  
Prob. 121. c. 16

Damasc. de fide  
l. 4. c. 11.

Learn we after *Jacobs* example, upon special occasions to make solemn vows to God. It is very amiable in Gods eyes, when we endeavour by vowing both to bring a voluntary necessity upon our selves of doing good, and withall to contract a nearer familiarity, that we may the more effectually prevail with God in our devotions. Art thou then cast upon a sick bed, and desirest to be recovered; engaged in some desperate warfare or dangerous wayfare, whether by Sea or Land, and desirest to be preserved or delivered: Finally, art thou invironed with necessities, straits, difficulties, and wouldst be supplied, advised, directed? do not onely pray to God for health, counsel, safety, but vow to him the performance of some singular service upon the grant of thy request.



Gen. 35. 1.  
Par. *ibid.*

Aug. Ep. 45.

Bern. Ep. 2.

Hieron. in list  
Fepht.

Naz. Orat. 53.

Ecclesi. 5. 435.

Psal. 132. 1.  
Aug. *ibid.*

And whereas it was the fault of this good man, that what he now *vowed* he was afterwards *backward* in *performing*; nor did he pay it till it pleased *God* as it were *aurem vellicare*, & *voti istic olim suscepti admonere*, to twich him by the ear, and put him in mind of his promise: Let us not onely *vow* a *vow* by *saying*, but *pay* our *vow* by *doing*. *Iam novisti, jam te obstrinxisti, tenetur apud Deum sponsio tua*, saith Saint *Austin* excellently, having *vowed* thou art bound, thy promise is upon record in heaven. And as Saint *Bernard* elegantly, *juste exigitur ad solvendum, qui non cogitur ad novendum*: He who was not compelled to *vow*, is justly required to *pay*. And therefore to allude to Saint *Hieromes* expression with a little alteration, Be not in *vovendo stultus*, foolish in *vowing*, nor yet much less in *non reddendo impius*, wicked in *breaking*. *Vow* not easily without very just cause, and do not dare to violate thy *vow* for any cause, but rather according to that pithy advice of *Gregory Nazianzen*, *ἡ παρρηλία δι' ἐσχῆς γινόμενη τέλει λαμβανέτω δι' ἔργου*, having begun a promise by *vowing*, consummate it by acting: ever remembring that excellent saying of the *Wise-man*, When thou *vowest* a *vow* unto *God*, defer not to *pay* it: Better is it that thou shouldst not *vow*, than that thou shouldst *vow* and not *pay*. As therefore thou dost adjoyn *vows* to thy *prayers*, so annex *prayers* to thy *vows* for grace to keep the *vows* thou hast made. It is *S. Austin* question upon those words, *Lord remember David how he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob*, *Ad quam rem*, To what end would *David* have *God* remember him? To which he returns this answer, *Ad hoc memento; ut impleat quod promisit*, *Lord remember David* for this end, that he may fulfil that which he hath promised. Let the like be our petition to *God* whensoever we *vow* a *vow* to him:



him: nor can we do it better, then (with a little addition) in that *Collect* of our Church, *Lord from whom all good things doe come, grant us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration, we may think (and vow) those things that be good; and by thy mercifull guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Collect  
for the first  
Sunday after  
Easter.

Having led you up the stairs, and opened the doore, be pleased to enter in and take a view of the severall rooms in this well-compacted building. More plainly, in this row of *Jacob*, observe these two generalls: The *Matter*, and the *Condition*. In the former, we shall see *promissionem*, what he promised to God, namely, that the Lord should be his God. In the later, *Petitionem*, what he desired of God, namely, that he would be with him, and keep him in his way, and give him bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that he may come again to his fathers house in peace.

That which we are first to insist on, is that which is *1. Gen.* last in the Text, and is exprest in these words, *The Lord shall be my God*. For the right understanding whereof, be pleased to know,

1. This phrase, *the Lord shall be my God*, is capable of a double construction, either in a way of descending from God to man, or in a way of ascending from man to God.

1. By way of descending from God to Man, the Lord is his God, to whom he vouchsafes a peculiar favour, and of whom he is pleased to take a speciall care. In this sense he is called *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, and it is the matter of the promise which God made to Abraham and his posterity, *I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee*. In this notion some *Inter-* *Exod. 3. 6.*  
*preters* here take it, understanding these words as the last branch of the condition of *Jacobs* vow, and then the matter *Gen. 17. 7.*  
*Vide Merc. in loc.*

matter of it is onely that which *followes* in the next *verse*. But had these words been intended by *Jacob* as a part of the *condition* of his *vow*, he would probably have placed them in the *beginning*, since this near *relation* of having the *Lord to be his God*, is the *foundation* of all the rest; and therefore according to this construction, the rational order of the words had been thus; *If the Lord shall be my God, and be with me, and keep me in the way that I shall goe, &c.* Nor is there any *need*, (as will hereafter appear) of *fastning* this interpretation upon the words to avoid any *objection* which may be made against the *other*, to which (with the generality of *Expositors*) I shall rather adhere, and accordingly construe the words.

2. By way of *ascending* from Man to God, and so they *begin*, yea after a sort *comprehend* the matter of his *vow*. For the further clearing of which, know,

2. That even in this latter construction, the words are capable of a double notion: The one *generall* and ordinary, the other *speciall* and extraordinary.

1. In the *generall* and common notion, *The Lord is his God*, who makes him the *sole* and whole object of his *trust*, *love*, *fear*, *worship* and *obedience*. Those Divine *Attributes* which are *prædicated* of the *Deity*, do justly call for all these. His *omnipotency* obligeth to *trust*, his *goodnesse* to *love*, his *justice* to *fear*, his *Majesty* to *worship*, and his *Soveraignty* to *obedience*. Were not these *excellencies* in *Jehovah*, he could not *be a God*; and unlesse we perform these *duties* to him, he cannot *be our God*. When *David* saith of God, *Thou art my God*, he proves it by this, *I trust in thee*, and in another place by this, *I delight to do thy will*. When the Church saith, *O Lord thou art my God*, she presently addeth, *I will exalt thee*. When that Heathen King said to *Daniel*, *Thy God*

Psal. 31. 14.  
40. 8.

Isa. 25. 1.

God, he addes as it were by way of *explication*, *Whom* Dan. 6. 16.  
*thou servest continually.* That *first* and *great command*,  
*Thou shalt love the Lord*, is with this addition, *thy God*. By  
all which it appeares, that the *Lord* is then *our God*, when  
we place our *confidence* in him, set our *affections* on him,  
and yield *subjection* to him. It is foretold concerning  
the *Christian Church* by the Prophet *Hosea*, *I will say* Hos. 1. 23.  
*to them which were not my people, Thou art my people;*  
*and they shall say, Thou art my God.* Now as for *God* to  
say of us, we are *his people*, is as much as to say, we are  
those whom he hath *culled out* as his *peculiar*, with whom  
he is entred into *covenant*, and to whom he will vouch-  
safe *singular defence* and *succour*. So for us to say of him,  
*Thou art my God*, is as much as to say, Thou art he  
whom *alone* we account *worthy* of our *faith, hope, love,*  
*fear, and service.* Indeed these *two* are *reciprocally*. What,  
or whomsoever a man maketh *his God*, that he *trusts* in,  
is *afraid* of, bears *love*, and yields *service* to: and to what  
or whomsoever a Man *gives all* or *any* of these, that  
is a mans *God*. Not but that in a *subordinate* and *rela-*  
*tive* way we may perform at least some of these *acts* to  
the *creature*, to wit, *for* and *under God*. Yet still what-  
soever it is, that these *acts* are so *directed* to, as that they  
are *terminated* in, is our *God*. By this time you see what  
is the generall import of this part of *Jacobs* vow.

That which may *rationally* be objected, is, that this *Object*.  
is the matter of a *command*, and therefore needlesse to  
be the matter of a *vow*. That *first Commandment*, *Thou* Exod. 10. 3.  
*shalt have no other Gods before me*, doth manifestly im-  
ply, *Thou shalt have me for thy God*: according to that Semper in ne-  
known rule of expounding the *Commandments*, *Where* gativis meminc-  
the *Negative* is *expressed*, the *Affirmative* is *included*. This rimus affirmati-  
is a part of that *Law* which was *ingraven* from the very tiva contineri.  
*first.* Strigel. loc.  
Theol.



There are many (saith he) that vow not to drink wine *Aug. de Nat. Dom. Ser. 3.* for a certain time, and to fast certain dayes, *Sed non est votum optimum nec perfectum, adhuc melius volo:* But this is not the best and perfect vow, I would have you make a better, offer your selves to God by holy manners, chaste thoughts, fruitfull words, by ceasing from evil, and turning to good. And yet nearer to this Vow in the Text, he saith in another place, *Quid debemus vovere credere in illum, sperare ab illo vitam, bene vivere,* what ought we to vow to God, but to believe on him, hope in him, and live to him? *In Psal. 75.*

No wonder then, if we find severall instances of Vows and Covenants of this nature. Moses having delivered the Law to the people, causeth them to enter into a solema Covenant of observing it, *All that the Lord ha's said, we will doe, and be obedient.* *Exod. 24. 7.* When Asa gathered all Judah and Benjamin together to enter into a covenant, what is the matter of it, but to seek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their souls? *2 Chr. 15. 12.* The like was the matter of those covenants, which were made in the time of that good King Iosiah, and of that excellent Governour Nehemiah, for so it is exprest, to walk after the Lord, to walk in Gods Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and doe all the commandements of the Lord our God, and his judgements, and his statutes. Thus David saith of himself, *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments:* And here Iacob vows, that the Lord shall be his God. These are those communia vota, common vows, as S. Bernard calls them. *Hoc totum omnes debemus vovere,* saith S. Austin. Whereas other kind of vows are peculiar to some sorts of men, this is that which all of us ought to vow. *Bern. de modo bene vivendi, Ser. 62. Aug. in Ps. 75. 5.*

Quest.

If you shall yet more particularly enquire why the servants of God may and do bind themselves to bounden duties? I answer, especially for two reasons:

Answ.

1. That hereby they may testify the reality and fervency of their desire to fulfill Gods precepts, and in particular to take him for their God; what we earnestly desire and cordially intend we are ready by all means and wayes to oblige our selves unto. He that truly meaneth to pay his debt, will not be backward to enter into bond. Indeed, so great hath been the zeal of the people of God in this particular (as appeares in those forementioned instances) that they have not onely engaged themselves by protestation, but adjuration, nay execration, entring into a vow, nay oath, yea curse, to seek the God of their fathers, and walk in the law of the Lord.

Hoc voto sua  
voluit infirmi-  
tati consulere,  
&c. Merc. in  
loc.

2. That hereby they might provide against the infirmity and perverseness of their corrupt nature, which is so backward to what is good, that many cords are scarce strong enough to bind us to the Altar. It is in this case with us as it is with wild beasts, which though put in inclosed grounds, yet wil not be kept in, unless iron fetlocks be put upon them, Religionis vota compedes, saith one elegantly, vovæ are as it were those fetters with which we had need to be kept within compasse, notwithstanding the inclosure of divine precepts.

Mend. in I.  
Reg. c. 5.  
Num. 11.

To come closer to this particular in my Text.

1. Were there neither law nor vow to bind us to have the *Jehovah* for our God, yet even this is reason enough that he is *Jehovah*; a word which signifies one who both hath an absolute and perfect being of himself, and is the author and originall of being to all things besides himself, and who then, if not this *Jehovah*, should be our God?

2. The

2. The obligation of a divine precept to this as all other duties, is so great, as there cannot be a greater, and therefore there needs no other to be added to it to make it stronger than in it self it is ; nay, whatever other obligations are joyned with it, they are inferiour, in force and energy to it. This one consideration, that God hath required us to take him for our God, ought in reason to engage us more strongly than either any promise which God hath made to us of rewarding those who have him to be their God, or any vow which we have made to him, that he shall be our God. *Major est auctoritas imperantis quam utilitas servientis*, saith Tertulian truly, Divine authority should be of greater force than our own utility : and therefore Gods precepts, which have upon them the stamp of his authority, are more binding than his promises, which perswade by representing to us our own advantage. And how far short the obligation of our vows is to that of Gods commands, will appear from that of an Ancient, who said, no less justly than devoutly, *Domine plus tibi quam mihi, meipsum debeo*, Lord I owe my self more to thee than to my self : and consequently it is most just that God should have a greater command over us than we over our selves ; and if so, his precepts must needs more bind us than our own vows.

*Text. de panis.*

3. Notwithstanding it is in it self so reasonable to have the Lord for our God, and the precept is so expresse of having none other ; yet, we are all very prone to make something else our God ; whilest the ambitious man saith to honour, the voluptuous to pleasure, and the covetous to wealth, what David said to Jehovah, thou art my God ; which of us, if we seriously examine our selves, may not accuse our selves of Idolatry, if not corporall yet spirituall, whilest we shall find something or  
C 2 other



other which we *trust*, or *fear*, or *love*, or *serve* more than God.

4. By *vowing* to have the Lord for our God, we adde, though not a *stronger*, yet *another* obligation to that of *divine precept*, which appears in that the *breach* of it addeth a new *guilt*; for whereas *before* the *vow*, if a man sinneth, he is onely a *transgressor of the law*, after it he is also a *breaker of covenant*: and so contracts upon himself a *double guilt*; in which regard, the *laying a vow* upon our selves to *avoid* that from which, or *doe* that to which we are already bound, cannot but be to our corrupt nature both *frantum* and *stimulus*, a *bridle* to restrain us from the one, and a *spur* to excite us to the other.

I end this, as for those things which are manifestly *sinfull*, to *vow* them (under what *pretence* soever) is height of *impiety*. Those *covenants* which ingage men, instead of keeping Gods law, injuriously to *violate* at once the law both of God and man, and perfidiously to *break* their own former oaths, are no better than *leagues with Hell*, and *covenants with the Devil*. Upon which account, how great cause this land hath to *mourn* bitterly, and *repent* speedily, at once, both for *making and breaking vows*, I pray God we may all yet at last *consider* sadly. But as for those things which are *plainly commanded* us by God, we cannot bind our selves too fast to the performance of them; and therefore, though the very *command* should be enough to oblige us, yet it will be both our *wisdome* and *piety*, (considering the *perverseness* and *deceitfulness* of our own hearts) by *voluntary vows*, to impose upon our selves (even) *necessary duties*; and in particular to *vow* with *Jacob* here, that the Lord shall be our God.



2. Besides this *general*, there may be a more *peculiar* construction of those words, *The Lord shall be my God*, by expounding them not *seorsim*, but *conjunctim*, Vid. Nels. 100. not by themselves, but in conjunction with the following verse, and so the meaning is, he would in an *extraordinary* way own the Lord as his God, by *erecting* a place for his worship, and *consecrating* a tenth part of his estate to his service; and in this sense *the Lord shall be my God*, is most properly the *object* of a religious *vow*.

To illustrate this a little, know, that according to the determination of the *Schools*, the *object* of a *vow* strictly so called, must be,

2. *Bonum melius*, that which is good, not onely in the *positive*, but the *comparative* degree, and consequently the more *excellent* any thing is (provided it be within our power to perform) the more *fit* to be the matter of a *vow*. Vid. Ell. in Sent. l. 4. dist. 28.

2. *Bonum indebitum*, such a good as we were *not obliged* to before our *Vow*. Indeed this must be understood in a *qualified* sense, by distinguishing between the *substantials* and the *circumstantials* of that good we vow; as also between an *expresse* and a *virtual* command. As we cannot *do*, so neither can we *vow to do* any thing which may justly deserve to be called a *work of supererogation*, that is, a thing which is over and above what the *latitude* of Gods *law* reacheth to: But there are some things we may vow which are not *expressely* commanded, and *circumstantiated* by the *Divine law*; and to speak properly, things of this nature are the *most fit* matter of *Vows*.

To bring this home to the present case, though that *Jacob* should *have the Lord for his God*, is for the substance of it an *expresse* command, yet to have him for  
his

*his God in such an extraordinary way as here he mentions, was more than Gods law did expressly injoyn. For Zachæus to give his goods to the poor is that which the law of God obliged him to ; but to give half his goods was a free-will offering, the law having no where precisely determined how much of our goods we should give. That*

*Psal. 119. 146. David should praise God was a duty directly prescribed, but that he should praise him seven times a day was no where exactly determined. In like manner, that Jacob should have the Lord for his God, so as to worship him in some place, & to honor him with his substance, was according to express precept, but that he should so own him for his God, as to erect an Altar in that place for his Worship, and to give him the tenth of all that he should have, was no where punctually enjoined him, and therefore he doth here engage himself by vow to do them.*

*I shall close up this with a short meditation : When we expect extraordinary favours, it is but reasonable we should vow some eminent service. That Merchant did very well in making (had he done as well in keeping) his vow, who being in apparent danger of losing his ship, goods, life, by a violent Storm, vowed to Jupiter if he would bring him safe to shore, Hecatombs of sacrifices to be offered upon his Altar. Our Saviour saith, To whom much is given, of him much shall be required : it is no less true, God looketh for much from him who expects much from God. This no doubt was the inducement which put Jacob upon this engagement, that in such a special manner the Lord should be his God : And so I pass from the matter to*

*2 Gen. The condition of this Vow, as it is expressed in those words, If God will be with me & keep me in this way that I go, and give me bread to eat and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace. Wherein two things*

things offer themselves to our consideration, namely, The manner of proposal, and the things propounded.

The manner of proposal is in the particle *If*, which *Partic. 1.* being of various construction, and here liable to misconstruction, would be a little examined and rightly settled. To which end I shall discourse it both *Negatively* and *Affirmatively*.

On the one hand this particle *If* is not in *this* place, *Negat.*

1. *Si dubitantis*, an *If* of *hesitation* : indeed many times it is so used, things which men are sure of they expresse *positively*, but when they are doubtfull they speak with an *If*. So the Psalmist : *If he hath shut up in anger his tender mercies*, in a way of doubting; and therefore our Translators firly read it as a question, *Hath he shut up ?* with which agrees that of Saint Paul to the Chief Captain, *τίς εἶπὲς μοι, may I speak unto thee ?* thus (as Mercer tells us) some here construe it, and look upon it as this holy mans infirmity, that he doubted whether God would be with him or no. But since Jacob had but even now been assured by God in a vision, that the things here mentioned should be performed, it is not *rationall* to imagine he should so soon entertain doubting, when he had so lately received an assurance from the God of truth.

Psal. 77. 9.

Acts 11. 37.  
V. Merc. in loc.

2. Nor yet is it *Si stipulantis*, an *If* of *Stipulation*; when this particle *If* is used in *contracts* and *bargains*, it carries in it a *restriction*, and includeth in it a *negation If*, then, in such cases implies *else not*. And thus we are still to understand it where it is prefixed before the promises which God makes to us : so in that speech of God to Cain, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ?* And again, in those words of God to Solomon, *If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray,*

Gen. 4. 7.

2 Chron. 7. 14

Job 7. 9.

13. 15.

Gen's aman-  
das & Deus, &c.  
Aug Dom. 18.  
post Trin.  
Serm. 1.

Psal. 44. 19,

10. 21.

Dan 3. 17, 18.

*pray, &c. then I will hear from heaven, &c.* But we must not thus construe it in this promise of *Jacob* to *God*, as if these words did import, that *if God would not be with him, &c. he should not be his God*: for this were to make him a base hireling, who serves onely for his wages. Indeed this was that calamity which the Devil would have fastened upon *Job*, when he saith, *Doth Job fear God for nought?* And how false it was appears, as by his patience under afflictions, so by his resolute expression, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*: far be it from *Job* or *Jacob* to serve *God* for end, they that take him upon such terms, are not holy but crafty; nor is their service obedientia, but mercatura, a yeilding obedience to him, but rather a trading and merchandizing with him. He loves *God* best, who loves him for himself, and resolves to cleave to him though he seems to leave him. Such was the temper of the Church, as is exprest in those words, *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death; If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange God, shall not God search this out?* The same spirit it was that lodged in those three Worthies, when they peremptorily told *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King; but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden Image which thou hast set up.* Nor need we doubt to affirm the like of *Jacob*, that however *God* should deal with him in his journey, yet he was resolved that he should be his *God*.

2. On the other hand, we may very justly look upon this *If* in a three-fold notion, namely, as

affirmat.

1. Si inferentis, an *If* of illation, and that two wayes:

1. By

1. By way of *consequence*, *If* sometimes is as much as *when* or *after*. Thus by the Prophet *Isaiah*, where it is said, *He that is left in Sion shall be called Holy, If, that is,* Isa. 3. 4. (as our Translators render it) *when, or after the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Sion.* To which accords that of our Saviour, *If (that is, after) I depart* John 16. 7. *I will send him unto you.* And in this sense it is likewise used by the Latines, so in *Terence*, *Hermes si redierit, When my Master comes home.* According to this construction we may take it here, but with a caution: *When, or after God shall be with me, he shall be my God*, is not to be meant exclusively, as if he were *not before*. No doubt *Jacob* being piously educated, had already learned to take *Iehovah* for his God. But notwithstanding he might resolve that *after his return* he should still be *his God*, and that then he would make a publick and extraordinary testification of it, by building him an Altar in this place where he had so graciously appeared to him, and giving him the tenth of his estate.

2. Or, by way of *causality*, *If* may import as much as *because*, and is so used many times in the *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latine*. *My mouth shall praise thee (saith David) with joyful lips, if I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate* Psal. 63. 5, 6. *on thee in the night watches.* Where the particle  $\square$  is not onely ordinal but causal, importing not onely the time, but the reason of his praising God with his lips, namely, the meditation of him in his heart. Thus when the Apostle saith, *If you be risen with Christ, seek those* Col. 3. 1. *things which are above*, that *If* hath the force of a *Because*, and so it is in all hypothetical syllogisms. Accordingly that known saying of *Cato*, *Si Deus est animus---* Cato Sent. may well be rendred, *because God is a Spirit.* And where it is said in *Virgil*,

Virg. Georg.

*vestro si munere tellus**Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista :*

In this acception it will hold here very well, *Because God will be with me, &c.* And that which *Jacob* implies, is, that the collation of mercy should be an obligation to piety. If *Iacob* find God merciful, God shall not find *Iacob* undutiful. This is that which he both *might* and *ought* to do. No wonder if he promise to do it.

1. It was that which he *might* do. Though Divine favours should not be the *final*, yet they may be the *impulsive* cause of our service; though they must not be the high prize for which we run, yet they may be *spurs* to quicken us in our race. We must not look upon them as our *ultimate end*, but we may use them as *persuading motives*. God himself so *propounds* them in his *Word*; surely then we may so *propose* them to our selves.

2. Nay more, this was that he *ought* to do. It is but *reason*, that if he *prevent* us with his benefits, we should follow him with our service. If he *draw* us with the cords of love, we should run after him with the feet of obedience. God takes it very ill from *David's* hands, that having heaped upon him so many mercies, he should *despise* his commands. When he had planted *Israel* like a vineyard on a fruitful hill, fenced it, gathered the stones out of it, in a word, done so much as more could not be done for it, he justly lookt that it should bring forth grapes, and takes it unkindly that it brought forth wild grapes. It is no more than what justice and thankfulness requires, that if God doth hire us with his benefits, we should do his work; let out his good things to us, we should pay him rent; and that his sweet voice of love should be answer'd with an echo of praise. The Poet being sensible of *Cæsars* favours, resolves ---- *Erit ille mihi semper Deus*, He should  
always

King

alwayes be to him as a God: Much more justly doth *Ja.* Musc.  
*cum proposito gratitudinis*, in a way of gratitude here  
 vow, *If God will be with me, &c.* then God shall be my God.  
 Nor is this *If* onely a particle of illation, but

2. *Si admirantis*, an *If* of admiration; for so *Musculus* Id. ib.  
 glosseth upon the words. *Jacob* having received assurance  
 from God of manifold mercies to be conferred upon  
 him, knows not how enough to expresse his sense of  
 Gods love towards him, and therefore *prorumpit in vo-*  
*tum*, breaks forth into a vow, and begins it with an *If*,  
 which (as sometimes it hath) seems to have the force  
 of an Interrogation, and that in a way not of doubting, but  
 wondering. As if he should have said, *What? is it thus?*  
*Will the Lord be so exceeding gracious to me, and shall not I*  
*be more than ordinarily grateful unto him?* Nay surely, if  
 God will so far vouchsafe as to be with me, and keep me in  
 this way that I go, &c. he shall be my God.

3. Lastly, it is *Si orantis*, an *If* of supplication. When  
*Moses* uttered those words, *And now if thou wilt* (he in-  
 tends as much, oh that thou wouldst) *forgive the sin of*  
*this people*; and that of *David*, *If thou wilt slay the wicked* Exod. 32. 27.  
*O God*, though it be rendred by our Translators, as if it Psal. 139. 19.  
 were *Si asserentis*, an *If* of confidence; surely, it may no Luke 21. 42.  
 less fitly be translated, as *Si optantis*, an *If* of desire, *Oh*  
*that thou wouldst slay the wicked*. Suitable to this is that  
 of our Saviour, *Father if thou be willing*, that is, (on that  
 thou wouldst) *remove this cup from me*. And thus in that  
 of the Poet; *Si* is as much as *Utinam*,

*Si nunc se nobis ille aureus arbore ramus*  
*ostendat* —————

To this notion the fore-named *Expositor* alludes, when  
 he saith *Jacob* uttered these words, not as a condition, but  
 a Petition. And to the same purpose *Paraus, non dubitat* Virg. Aeid. 6.  
Non per modum  
conditionis, sed  
cum spiritu  
precationis.  
Musc. in loc.  
Par. ibid.



*sed petit* : *Jacob* doth not doubt, but ask : So that we may well read the words, *Oh that God would be with me, and keep me in this way that I goe, &c.* According to which construction his design is to expresse what were those things which he desired God should doe for him. And so I am faine on the

**Partic. 2.** *Matter proposed*, in these words, *God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I goe, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace.* For the full handling whereof, I will first take the clauses asunder, and then put them together.

1. If you look upon them severally you shall find there are four things that *Jacob* doth here desire of God: 1. His mercifull presence, will be with me: 2. Powerfull protection, And keep me in this way that I goe: 3. Convenient provision, And give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on: 4. Prosperous rediction, So that I come again to my Fathers house in peace.

1. The first thing that he craves of God is his mercifull presence, that he would be with him, and this is indeed the genus that comprehends, the cause that produceth all the rest. In which respect Saint *Chrysostome* saith upon those word, *God was with the lad* τὸ τοῦ κυρίου τὸ ὄπλον ἀκαταγώνιστον, τὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἡ μέγιστη θησαυρία, This (meaning Divine presence) is both our strongest weapon and richest treasure.

Indeed in a large sense there was no need for *Jacob* to desire God to be with him, since nothing is without him. Suppose we in our thoughts a sphere of infinite greatness, whose centre is every where, and circumference no where; it must necessarily follow, that all things besides are encompassed by, and contained in it. Such a sphere is

God.

Gen 28. 20.  
Chrysost. Hom.  
46. in Gen.



God, no wonder if Seneca could say, *Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat, opus suum implet;* which way soever we turn our selves we may behold him meeting us, who fills all he hath made, and is absent from none of his creatures. Well were it, if we would ever thus behold him present with us, wherever we are, and whatever we do. This is that presence of God, which though there is no need to desire, yet there is great reason to observe, that we may not dare to do any thing unbecoming so glorious a Majesty.

But doubtlesse that which *Jacob* intends when he would have God to be with him, is, that he would vouchsafe his peculiar, intimate and effectual presence, whereby he is so with his own servants, as he is with none beside. It is not unworthy our observation, that gradation of phrases, by which this presence of God is set forth in Scripture. The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him in truth, saith the Psalmist; whereas Solomon tells us, he is far from the wicked. Nor is he onely *prope*, but *cum*, *nigh*, but with his servants; so he saith to Israel, Thou art my servant, I am with thee. Nor is he onely *cum*, but *circa*, with, but about his people, as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord round about them that fear him, saith David. Nor is he onely *circa*, but *in*, about, but in his people. So the Psalmist, God is in the generation of the righteous. Nor is he only *in*, but *in medio*, in, but in the midst of them, I come and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. To be *with* is more then to be *nigh*, since nearnesse may consist with some distance. To be *round about* is more than to be *with*, since he that is onely on a mans right or left hand may be said to be *with* him. To be *in* is more then to be *round about*, since that doth onely note an adjacency, this

Sen. de benef.  
l. 4. c. 8.

Psal. 145. 18.

Prov. 15. 39.  
Isa. 41. 9, 10.

Psal. 135. 2.  
Psal. 145.

Zach. 2. 10.

an.

an inherency. Finally, to be *in the midst* is more than onely to be *in*, the *middle* being the very *centre*. And why all these *expressions*, but to intimate Gods near, *speci-ally*, and *gracious* presence with his people ?

This was that which *Jacob* desired : and good reason ;  
For,

Psal. 27. 10.

1 Sam. 1. 8.

1. *Jacob* had left his *Fathers house*, where were his *best friends* on *earth* ; and what could now render his life comfortable but the *presence of God in heaven* ? It rejoiced *David* to consider, that *when his father and his mother forsook him*, yet the *Lord would take him up*. And surely now *Jacob* was gone from his father and mother, it would much *revive him* to have *God with him*. Am not I better to thee then ten sons, said *Elkanah* to *Hannah* ? *God* is better than *parents*, or *kindred* and *friends*, and his *presence with us* will sufficiently recompence their *absence from us*.

Amb. l. de Isaac  
c. 3.

Bern. in Cant.  
Serm. 85.

2. *Jacob* was now in a journey, and, at such a time especially, good company doth well. Comes facundus in via pro vehiculo, saith *Publius* truly, a cheerfull associate speedeth a mans way ; and reddit iter leve & breve, makes a mans journey seem both easier and shorter. But no company like to Gods ; Solus non est cui praesul adest Deas, saith *S. Ambrose* sweetly : *Jacob*, though alone, is not alone, if *God be with him*. It is an excellent note of *S. Bernard* upon those words of *Christ* to the Spouse, Arise and come ; Non parū confortat quod audit veni & non vade, &c. It was no smal comfort to the Spouse to hear that sweet word Come, and not Go ; by which she understood that she was not sent, but led, and that her bridegroom would go with her. Quid enim difficile sibi illo comite reputet ? For what way can be rugged to her, whilest he vouchsafes to be her companion ? It *God be with us* in a prison, it is no longer a confinement :

Neque

*Neque enim poterit carcer videri in quo Socrates erat,* Sen. in Consolat. id Helvid.  
 said he, *That cannot be a prison where Socrates is :* but I καὶ ἐν ἐρη-  
 may much more truly say, *That cannot be a prison where* μίσθωμεν, ὡς  
*God is.* If God be with us in a desert, it is no longer soli- δεῦρος ἐτίθε-  
ται τὸ μέγα-  
 tary ; he cannot be lonely, though alone, who hath a God λον τὸ μέγα-  
 to cheer him. Excellently S. Chrysostom, if God please, Chrysost. in  
Gen. hom. 46.  
 though we be in a wilderness, we need none else to ac-  
 company us.

3. *Homo gaudet de propinquitate amici,* every man is  
 glad to have his friend near him. If a man be on a journey,  
 the company of a stranger is acceptable, but of a friend  
 is most desirable. Jacob knew the Lord, his Grandfa-  
 ther Abraham, his Father Isaac and himself had found  
 him to be a sure, a fast friend ; can you blame him to de-  
 sire his society ? No friends to a man in any difficulty  
 like a good God and a good conscience.

4. *Iacob made an account of troubles which might be-*  
*fall him in his way ;* no wonder if he would have God  
 go with him ; ὅταν ἐμμενῇ τὸν θεὸν ἔχοντες, καὶ ἐν ἐρήμῳ ὤμεν τῶν Chrysost. l. 1. c. 3.  
ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι διαγόντων ἀσφαλέστερον διατρίβομεν, saith the  
 Greek Father sweetly, *When we have God propitions, we*  
*are more secure in the open field than others are in walled*  
*cities.* The truth is, I do not on the one hand much won- John 6. 17.  
Vid. Cyr. Alex.  
ibid.  
Psal. 23. 4.  
 der at the fear of the Disciples in the ship, when besides  
 the darkness of the night, and vehemency of the storm, I  
 read that *Jesus was not come to them :* on the other hand,  
 I lesse marvell at the confident resolution of David,  
*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet*  
*will I fear no evil,* when I presently read, *for thou art with*  
*us.* It Gods presence go with us, as we need not care who  
 else is with us ; so neither need we fear who or what  
 is against us. It is moved as a Question, Why, where-  
 as the Prophet foretold concerning the Messiah, *thou shalt*  
*call.*

Isa 7. 14.  
Matth. I. 23.

call his name *Immanuel*, the *Angels* precept is, *Thou shalt call his name Iesus*. To which this ingenuous answer is returned, that the names *Immanuel* and *Iesus*, though they differ in sound, are much one in sense. *Immanuel* signifieth *God with us*, and *Iesus* a *Saviour*; and if *God be with us*, *salvation cannot be far from us*. In one word, as the presence of the *Sun* dispels all *clouds*, so doth *Divine* presence prevent all *troubles*, at least the *evil* of them.

Psal. 23. 1.

5. *Jacob* supposeth he might need *supplies* in his journey, and he knew *Gods* presence would furnish him. *The Lord is my shepherd* (saith *David*) therefore I shall not want; whilest the *shepherd* is with his flock he will not let them want either *pasture* or *waters*. *Nihil ei deest cui adest omnium plenitudo*, saith *S. Ambrose*, No good things can be absent where the fulness of all things is present.

Ver. 2.

Tostat. in loc.

6. Lastly, *Jacob* considered that the chief errand about which his *Father* sent him, namely the taking of a wife, was a matter of serious concernment: besides, it so fell out, that he was intrusted by *Laban* with the managing of his estate, and in all weighty undertakings; who fitter than *God* to consult with? To this accords *Tostatus* his glosse, *If God will be with me, dirigendo negotium & statum meum*, to direct and order my affairs. It is no small content to a man, when he hath a friend no lesse prudent than faithfull at hand to advise with; the onely wise *God* is both the safest guide and the best Counsellour.

Exol. 33. 15.

By all this it appears how needfull the speciall presence of a propitious *God* is. Indeed *Moses* made so great an account of it, that being to conduct the *Israelites* to the land of promise, he saith unto *God*, *If thy presence go not with me carry us not hence*. Oh let it be our wisdom, as alwayes, so especially when we are engaged up-

on

on *perillous* journeys and *weighty* businesses, by earnest prayer to *implore*, and so *secure* the Divine presence, as here *Jacob* doth, when he saith, *If God will be with me.*

2. The next branch of his request is, *His powerful protection* in those words, *And keep me in this way that I go*; wherein there is something *implied* and *expressed*.

1. The thing *implied* is, *That in this way which Jacob was to go he should stand in need of keeping.* Indeed, which way can a man go wherein he may not be *endangered*, and therefore needs to be *preserved*? There are but *two* ways wherein any man can go, either the *earth* or the *water*, the *land* or the *sea*, and both are *perillous*. As for the *earth*, that indeed is *steady*, but our footing on it is not *steady*; many have *stumbled* upon *plain ground*: and as for the *perils* of the *water*, they are both *manifest* and *manifest*. By *land* we meet with *hills* and *desarts*, *bogs* and *theeves*: by *sea* we are *toft* with *tempests*, assaulted by *pirats*, run upon the *sands*, and dash against the *rocks*. I *speak* not this to *discourage* any from going that way to which *God* calls them, though it be never so long a *voyage* by *sea*, which yet seems to be more *dangerous* than the *land*. It is a pretty story of him, who saying *That his Father, Grandfather, and great Grandfather died at sea*; and being asked, *Why then do you go to sea*? Replied, *Where did your Father, Grandfather, and great Grandfather die*? and being answered, *In their beds*; wittily retorted; *Why then do you go to bed*? The truth is, there is no just reason to be more *timorous*, at least not more *anxious*, when we go by *sea*, than when we go by *land*; but withall, so great is the *peril* of both, that we stand in need of being kept. And this *Jacob* well knew, else what need of this prayer?

E

2. The

1 Sam. 2. 9.  
Vid. Mend.  
ibid.

Psa. 37. 23, 24.

Job 1. 10.

Quest.

Ans.

Psal. 34. 7.  
91. 11, 12.

See the Question ingeniously discussed in a book called *The Guardian Angel*, by R. D. Beatos illos spiritus propter nos remittis, in ministerium custodiae nostrae deputas, &c. Bern. Psal. 91. Sermon. 12.

2. The thing expressed is, that *Iacob* desired God to be his keeper: *The great Jehovah is the Lord Keeper and Protector of his servants. The Lord keepeth the feet of his Saints*; So runs the *Song of Hannah*: where if the question be asked why the feet are mentioned? the answer is aptly returned, that the feet bear the whole weight of the body; and besides, they are most subject to danger, so that by keeping of the feet the whole body is preserved. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way; though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand: where Almighty God is compared as it were to a loving nurse, or a tender Mother, which holds the weak child (when it goes) by the hand, that it may not fall. What the Devil said of *Job*, *Hast thou not made an hedge about him?* is true of every good man; the way which he goeth is hedged about with the fence of divine protection.

It it shall be enquired, *How God keepeth his servants in the way they go?* The Answer is returned by the Psalmist, *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him*: And again, *He shall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy wayes, they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy feet against a stone.* Where by the former Scripture it seems that one Angel guards many; and by the latter, that many Angels keep one. That a particular Angel is assigned by God to every particular person is by some probably asserted, that all the Angels have a charge given them to guard the Saints is certainly assured; and by the way we may at once take notice of the dignity of the Saints, whom God so highly honours, as to make as it were his household-servants to attend on them; and of the Angels humility, who willingly condescend not onely to be comites, but ba-

juli,

jult, as companions to go with us, but porters to carry us, putting as it were their hands under our feet to do us service.

Nor is Divine protection less efficacious, because by the ministry of Angels; since that Maxim, *Agens per medium est minus efficax in agendo*, A mediate agent is less effectual in operation, onely holds true when means are used *propter necessitatem*, not of choice, but of necessity. Whereas this cannot be imagined of God, who can preserve all things by the same immediate hand which made them. It is then no other but his good pleasure which moves him to make choice and use of Angels in this service. Nor yet are we to conceive that God doth so dispute the Angels to this employment, as that he takes no care of us himself; for though the Angels keep us *ratione executionis*, by ministerial service, yet God keeps us *ratione gubernationis*, by his over-ruling authority & providential influence. If you do but cast your eyes a little before upon *Jacobs vision*, you shall find this truth excellently illustrated, where the ladder represents *Jacobs* journey, upon which the Angels ascending and descending intimates their care of *Jacob* going and returning, upon the top of which the Lord stood, to wit, not onely as a spectator, but a moderator.

Verse 12, 13.

Vid. Par. in loc.

How happy are the servants of the true Jehovah! Hea-then worshippers are fain to keep their gods, the great God keeps his worshippers. *Fulgosus* tells a pretty story of one *Musonianus*, who perceived the Roman Army to stop in their march by reason of a bird sitting on a tree, in expectation of whose motion a Soothsayer stayed them, that he might divine by it; whereupon he shot his arrow and killed the bird, saying in derision, *What help can be expected from these creatures, which are not able to prevent a*



*danger hanging over their own heads ? All those Dii Tutelares, Tutelar Gods, (as the Heathen falsely called them) could not save themselves, much less their worshippers. But our God whom we serve, is both able and willing to keep us.*

To him therefore let us have recourse, on him let us depend for protection in all our journeys and voyages, and let us set him between us and harms. They are well kept whom God keeps. His eye is ever watchful, his hand is alwayes powerful, He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, he that keepeth thee will not slumber nor sleep. *Tuto dormivi, nam Antipater vigilavit, I slept securely while Antipater waked, said Alexander ; we may both awake and sleep, ride and sail, walk and run secure whilest God preserveth us. We are neither safe without him, nor in danger with him. Except the Lord keep the City, the watchman watcheth but in vain. If he withdraw his protection, it is neither the strength of horses and multitude of forces in war, nor the skill of the pilot and tallness of the vessel at sea can preserve us ; and if God undertake our defence, it is not the greatest dangers can injure us. How perillous was the Israelites journey out of Egypt, when in all probability the red sea might have been made redder by their blood, and the hills on both sides made larger by the heaps of their dead bodies, but the mighty God was their keeper, and brought them safe, not onely out of Egypt, but through the sea and wilderness, unto the land of Promise. Indeed, as S. Ambrose excellently, ibi plus auxilii ubi plus periculi, when danger is greatest then divine help is nearest ; and the more perillous the way is, the more doth God glorifie his mercy in his servants safety. He that keeps the sea from over-running the earth, can keep us from miscarrying ; though it be by sea, neither*

*waves*

*Psal. 121. 3, 4.*

*Psal. 127. 1.*

*Vides equum  
bonè formitum,  
binis vivibus,  
magno cursu  
præditum ? ista  
omnia viden-  
tur tibi promit-  
tere de illo sa-  
luti, sed fallunt,  
si Deus non tu-  
etur. Aug. in  
Ps. Vid. Cyr.  
in Amos c. 2.  
Amb. l. de Je-  
sep. c. 5.*



waves nor winds can hurt him whom God will preserve; and therefore in our greatest straits let us not cast away our confidence, but exercise our devotion, praying to God with Jacob here, that he would keep us in the way we go.

3. The next branch of his desire is convenient provision in those words, *And give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on.*

It may be here enquired, Whether Jacob had not provision of bread and rayment already with him? And if so, Why is this inserted in his petition? When Abraham sent forth Eleazar his servant to find out a wife for Isaac, he sent him forth with ample furniture; and is it to be imagined that Isaac would deal worse by his Son than his Father Abraham did by his servant? But to answer this, know,

Gen. 24. 10.

1. That how well soever Jacob were provided, this prayer was not needlesse; even rich men must be Gods beggars, and (as will appear by and by) have reason to pray for bread and rayment though they have it.

Ans.

Hoc tanquam  
pauper & vere  
Dei mendicum  
dixit, nec mi-  
rum, cum &  
Rex maximus  
egetum se ac  
pauperem &  
mendicum pro-  
fessus sit.  
Rup. in Gen.  
Marc. in loc.

2. It is not improbably conceived, that Jacob was sent forth from Isaac but in a mean condition, without any plentifull sustenance or attendance. For this reason, saith Mercer from the Rabbins, *Quò citius rediret & anhelaret ad domum patris*, that he might think the sooner of returning, and make the more haste home; and perhaps withall, that he might be the lesse envied and maligned by his brother Esau, who was enraged against him.

3. Besides, the extent of Jacobs desire for bread and rayment was till he came back to his Fathers house, and possibly his stay might be longer then he intended, and so his provision fall shorter then he expected.

To

To let this go, you may take notice in this request of these three things, The matter of his desire, *bread to eat, and rayment to put on*; The Donor from whom he desired them, namely, *God*; and upon what account, in that word *Give*.

1. The things he here desires of God are *bread and rayment*. Bread being the most generall and needfull food, is by a *Synecdoche* in *Scripture* put for all kind of *Aliment* which is necessary to the *sustentation* of nature, and *rayment* includes all things needfull for the *clothing* of the *body*. Indeed some of the *Rabbins* conceive, that *Jacob* having now got the *birth right* and *bleſſing*, had an eye to the *sacerdotall* garment, which the *first-born* did minister with in *holy* things. But this is a *far-fetcht* conceipt: the most *genuine* sense is, that all things necessary for his *feeding* and *clothing* are here meant by *bread and rayment*.

Vide Merc. in  
loc.

Vide modeſtiam  
Jacob, neceſſa-  
ria tantum po-  
ſtulat, id. ibid.

That which would be taken notice of is the *modesty* of this good man, who onely desires things necessary. He doth not ask of God *Quails*, or *Manna*, but onely *Bread*; he doth not beg *purple* and *fine linen*, *jewels* and *ornaments*, but onely *rayment*. It is as easie for God to give his servants *delicacies* as *bread*, *ſilks* as *cloth*, *superfluities* as *necessaries*; and if he be pleased to *blisse* our *lawfull* endeavours, and *throw* in *abundance* upon us, we must receive it *thankfully*, and use it *rightly*. Such, no doubt, was *Jacobs* resolve, as appears by that part of his vow, to give God the *tenth* of that state he should *bleſs* him with. But still with *Jacob* we must not enlarge too much in our *prayers* for *temporals*. This is that our *Saviour* hath taught us *Christians* in that excellent form of prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*: upon

Matth. 6. 11.  
Gr. Nyſſ. de orat.  
Dom orat. 5.

which Ggregory Nyſſen thus elegantly glosſeth, ἄριστον ὁδός, ὁ

τρυ-

τρυφήν, καὶ πλῆτορ, &c. Give us bread, not dainties, nor riches, not golden ornaments, nor silver vessels, or precious stones; not herds of oxen, flocks of sheep, or troops of horses; not large revenues, stately palaces, or numerous attendants (by all which the mind is too much withdrawn from better things) no, onely give us bread, that which may support nature and preserve life.

Oh how doth this check our grasping, soaring thoughts and desires! know we not that riches and honours are things too great for our bodies, and too little for our minds? they are more than we can use, and lesse than we would have; we may be well enough without them, and cannot be satisfied with them. Let me then bespeak you in those words of God to Baruch, Jer. 45. 5. *Seekest thou great things for thy self? Seek them not:* Or in that excellent counsel of the Apostle, *Having food and rayment, let us therewith be content.* It is a known saying, *Cui satis non est satis, nihil est satis:* our Proverb Englisheth it, *Enough is as good as a feast.* And if you would know what is enough, let Juvenal answer:

*In quantum sitis atque fames & frigora poscunt.*

Juven. Sat. 14.

That which is enough to keep off hunger, thirst & cold. It was Agurs prayer to God. *Give me neither poverty nor riches,* (both being like Scylla and Charibdis, destructive) *but feed me with food convenient for me:* And if you would know what is convenient, I answer in few words, that which is necessary for our own preservation, which is suitable to the present station wherein God hath set us, and is justly requisite for the charge committed to us. Within these bonds let us limit our desires, so shall we be followers of this godly Patriarch, who onely craveth bread and rayment.

Prov. 30. 8.

2. The

Pfal. 127. 1.  
41. 3.  
127. 2.  
Math. 5. 45.  
Pfal. 13. 5.

2. The *Donor* of whom he desireth this provision is *God*, the *Lord in heaven* is the *disposer* of all *things on earth*, we neither *have* them of our *selves*, nor can have them from *any other* but *him*, or at least by *his appointment*. It were easie to *instance* in all the various *comforts* of this present life; how it is *he* that *builds* the *house* wherein we dwell, that makes the *bed* (especially in our sicknesse) whereon we lie, that *gives his Beloved sleep* and rest upon her bed; that causeth the *sun to shine* and the *rain to fall*, that *prepares a table for us*, and causeth our *cup to run over*. But I shall *confine* my self to the *present instances*, the *bread we eat* is out of his *cupboard*, and the *rayment we put on* out of his *wardrobe*.

He *gives us bread*, inasmuch as he *blesteth the seed*, and giveth the *earth strength* to bring forth *corn*, whereas the *corn giveth bread to us*, he giveth as it were *bread to the corn* by the *dews of heaven*, & sendeth *seasonable weather* to ripen it and *gather it in*: He *giveth us rayment* in that he giveth us *sheep*, and covereth them with *wooll to clothe us*: He *giveth us both bread and rayment*, in that he gives *health and strength* to earn them, *peace and quietnesse* to enjoy them, *art and skill* to make them. Finally, he *gives us bread and rayment*, inasmuch as he gives *strength to our bread* to nourish us, *heat to our rayment* to warm us, a *blesting* with both, making them *beneficiall to us*. *Bread* and all externall things are but as so many *lumps* of the first *Chaos*, having in them neither *life nor light*, neither *strength nor comfort*, unlesse a *word preceed* out of the *mouth of God*. The truth is, if *God give us not our bread and rayment*, we shall either *not have* them, or having, *not be able to use* them, or using, shall not be *refreshed* by, or *satisfied* with them.

Matth. 4. 4.

Whether therefore we *want*, or *have bread and rayment*,

ment, let us desire God to give them us. If we want them, let us, with the hungry Ravens, cry and call upon him; nay, if we have them, let us still cry to him for his blessing on them, humbly acknowledging all to depend upon his gracious influence.

3. The account upon which Jacob desires bread and rayment of God, is Gift; whatever we have of God comes of free-gift. We neither can deserve any thing of him, nor repay any thing to him; not onely the glories of that other life, but the comforts of this life are undeservedly conferred upon us; the smallest crumbs are greater than our merits, and the worst rags better than our deserts. Oh my soul, make much of this word Give, and account it the chiefest ground of thy hope for whatever thou wastest, and the greatest strength of thy title to whatever thou hast. If God will give me bread to eat and rayment to put on, is Jacobs form of prayer at his going forth: I am not worthy, or (according to the Hebrew) am lesse then the least of all the mercy and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, in his form of thanksgiving when he returned home. And surely the consideration of our unworthinesse should so much the more oblige us to thankfulnesse. The more freely any thing is conferred, it is both so much the more acceptable to him that receives it, and the more worthy of praise to him that gives it. Oh let us learne with all humble thankfulnesse to acknowledge the very bread we eat, and the rayment we put on, to be not debita, but dona, due debis, but free gifts.

Gen. 32.10.

4. The last branch of Jacobs request is a prosperous reduction, in these words, So that I come again to my fathers house in peace. It is usuall with the Hebrews synec-

F

dochically

Merc. in loc.

dochically by *peace* to understand a *state of Prosperity*. *Mercers* paraphrase is, *salvus & incolumis*, a safe and prosperous return to his *Fathers* house in *due* time, is that then which here *Jacob* desireth of *God*.

Lipf. de const.  
l. c. 10.

There is implanted in every man by *nature* a *love* of his *Fathers-house*, *his native soyl*, where (as *Lipsius* elegantly phraseth it) we drew our *first breath*, and our feet did *first tread*; where our *infancy* flourished, *childhood* played, and *youth* was educated; where the *Heavens*, the *Rivers*, by often view have become *familiar* to us; where of a long time our *kindred*, *friends & companions* have lived: In a word, where there are those *objects* of *content*, which in *vain* we seek for any where else. True it is to a *wise* and *resolved* man (as *Tencer* once said) *Patria est ubicunq; bene est*, Where ever a man is well, that is his country: *Omne solum forti patria*, to a *magnanimous* mind every place is alike. He that *thinks* he can live *no where* but *where* he was *born*, and would confine himself to his *fathers house*, wants either *wit*, or *courage*, or *both*. A *prudent* and *valiant* man reckons himself with *Socrates* and *Diogenes* to be *κοσμοπολίτης*, a *Citizen of the world*, and therefore *refuseth* no *honourable* *employment*, though it be to the *utmost* parts of the *earth*. But yet still, as the *Orator* said truly, *Nullus locus est domesticâ sede jucundior*, No place is more *desireable* than a mans *native seat*. To which agrees that of the *Greek Poet*, τί γὰρ παλαιοῦς ἀνδρὶ φίλτερον; What is more *delectable* to a man than his *fathers house*? Hence it is, that

Cic. 5. Tusc.  
Ovid.  
Delicatus ille  
est adhuc cui  
patria dulcis  
est, fortis autem  
jam cui omne  
solum patria,  
perfectus cui  
mundus exili-  
um.  
Hug. de S. Vic.  
Natal. Com.  
Mythol. l. 2.  
c. 8.

Ænrip. in Agr.

ὅς ἐστιν γλυ-  
κίον ἢ πατρί-  
δος, &c.  
Hom. Odyss. 1.

*fede jucundior*, No place is more *desireable* than a mans *native seat*. To which agrees that of the *Greek Poet*, τί γὰρ παλαιοῦς ἀνδρὶ φίλτερον; What is more *delectable* to a man than his *fathers house*? Hence it is, that

I. Though *other places* be more *wealthy*, *fruitful*, *plea-*  
*sant* than a mans *own country*, yet (as he said) *quia sua*,  
because it is a mans *own*, he *prefers* it before them. *Rome*  
was far better than *Scythia*, and yet the *Barbarians* would  
leave *Rome* to return to *Scythia*. A *stately palace* in ano-  
ther

ther Land (to allude to *Homers* expression) is not so pleasing as a mans *Fathers house*, though it be a cottage. *Sertorius*, a citizen of *Rome*, having obtained many conquests abroad, at last sent to *Pompeius* and *Metellus* that he might return home, saying, *Malle se Romæ ignobilissimum civem, quàm exulem omnium aliarum civitatum Imperatorem nominari* : He had rather be one of the meanest inhabitants of *Rome*, than a Governour of all other Cities.

2. Banishment from a mans *Fathers house* and Country hath been ever accounted a grievous punishment :

— μὲν οὖν δ' ἐν ἀλλοῖς τόποις ἢ γῆς πατρίδος ἐξέσθαι — *Eurip. in Med.*

No greater trouble than for a man to be deprived of his native soyl. A Prison at home is more welcom than perpetuall exile. Those captive *Israelites* sit down, and striving as it were to out-vie the Rivers with their tears, weep by the waters of *Babylon*, saying, *How shall we sing the songs of Sion in a strange land ? Jephthah* took it very heinously that the *Elders of Gilead* cast him out of his *Fathers house* ; and as if they could not well have done him a worse injury, he construes it as a clear argument of their spiteful malice : Did you not hate me, and expell me out of my *Fathers house* ?

*Psal. 137. 1, 4.*

*Judg. 11: 7.*

3. When men are in forrain parts, (whether it be by forcible compulsion, or voluntary consent) they cannot choose but often think of their fathers house: *De loco peregrinationis proprii domicilii crescit affectus*, Our love to our home increaseth by our absence from it : And therefore it is when we are abroad in our persons, we are at home in our thoughts. So *Ovid* found it in his banishment,

*Cass. in Psal.*

137.

*Patriæ memoria dulcis.*

*Liv. 1. 3.*

*Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos*

*Ducit, & immemores non sinit esse sui.*

*Ovid. de pont. 1. 1. eleg. 4.*

There is such a sweetness (saith he) in ones native soyl,  
F 2 that



that though a man be absent from, it will not suffer him to be unmindful of it.

*Aves ipsæ per  
æra vagantes  
propriis nidos  
amant: erratiles  
feræ ad cubilia  
dumosa festi-  
nant, &c.*

*Cæf. l. i. ep.  
10.*

*--affueta leones  
antra petunt--  
Ovid. l. d.*

*Lipf. Cent. 2.  
ep. 54.*

4 Though upon some occasions men may be willing to leave their fathers house, yet they are desirous of return. We see it in other creatures; the wild beasts, which goe abroad to seek their prey, return to their dens; the Conies, that goe forth to feed, haste back to their holes; the Hare, that is put up by the Hunter, and pursued by the hounds, and almost tired, makes back to her fourme, though it be but to dye there. It is no lesse true in men; As they that are at Sea do often look towards the shore, and long for the Land: Sic ii qui in peregrinis locis ad patriam suam aspirant, saith Lipsius, so do Pilgrims and Travelers seek after their own Country. Homer and Ovid doe both tell us of Ulysses, how desirous he was to come so near his Country, as but

—καπνὸν ἀπὸ θυγατρὸς τοῦ πατρὸς,

*Hom. Odyss.  
Ovid. l. d.*

*Fumum de patris posse videre focis;*

to see the smoke coming out of the chimneys. Thus Jacob here, though at his Fathers command he left his house, yet he expresseth his desire of coming thither again in peace.

*Al. ad Al. Ge-  
nial. Hier. l. 6.  
c. 4.  
Aug. de Civit.  
Dei. l. 7. c. 1.*

This it is he begs of God, as well knowing, that as the success of his egress, to the welfare of his regress did depend upon Divine Providence. Alexander ab Alexandro tells us that one of Juno's names was Iterduca, and S. Austin, that she was called not onely Iterduca, but Domiduca, the Heathens looking upon that Goddess as a guide of their journey both in going out and coming home. This is undoubtedly true of the great God, by whose renewed goodness it is, that after long travels and many troubles men return home in safety. If he please to appoint a mans return, though there be never so many

monn-

mountaines of difficulty in the way, he shall over-leap them all. Good King David, by the rebellion of Absolom, was forced to flie from *Ierusalem*, with a sad heart (God <sup>2 Sam. 11. 14.</sup> knoweth) and (as appeareth by his doubtfull prayer) with <sup>26. & 19. 15.</sup> little hopes of returning. But not long after the *Rebellious Trassour* with all his confederates is *discomfited*, and the King cometh again to *Ierusalem* in peace, to the great joy of all his *loyall* subjects, and *confusion* of his *enemies*. The experience I doubt not of many can attest how *wonderfull providence* hath not onely carried them forth, but brought them back. And surely this is no *small mercy*, yea, indeed it is that which completes all other favours, when *providence* thus *lengtheneth* out the *line* of a mans *tranquillity*. That which *inviteeth* men to go forth, is an *hope* of coming home; scarce any man would leave his *country* were he sure to die before he returned. A comfortable *egresse* is a good *beginning*, a successfull *progresse* is an *addition* to, but a safe *regresse* is the *consummation* of the *mercy*. No wonder if *Iacob* desired of God so to keep him, as that he might come again to his fathers house in peace.

Having thus viewed the clauses *asunder*, put them together, and so look upon this petition of *Iacob* in a double reference, both *forward* and *backward*.

1. Look forward to the answer that God gave *Iacob* of this request, which we find far to exceed it. He desires of God that he might be kept and fed while he was abroad, and come home safe: But lo, over and above his desire, whereas he went forth with a *staff*, he returned with *two bands*; he went out *alone*, and returns with *wives* and *children*, *servants* and *cattel*; his desire was onely to come again in peace, and behold, he comes again, not onely in peace, but with *wealth*. Thus are Gods

grants

Pſ. 121. 2, 3, 8.

1 King. 3. 13.

Luk. 29. 41.

*grants many times larger then our desires: David asketh him life, and together with life he gives him a Crown. Solomon desireth wisdom, and with wisdom he giveth him riches and honour. The Thief upon the Crosse would onely be remembered by Christ, and Christ assureth him that he should be with him in his Kingdom.*

Gen. 42. 25.

Thus as a little water put into a pump, makes way for a great deal more to be drawn out; and as those thin and insensible vapours which ascend from the earth, fall down in great and abundant showres; so do our weak and short prayers return with full and enlarged answers, God dealing with his servants in this case as Ioseph did with his brethren in Egypt, when he did not onely put the corn in their sacks, but the money wherewith they purchased it.

How should this consideration engage and encourage us to the duty of prayer! Men in suing to their betters many times ask more then they expect; but in suing to God we may expect more then we ask: when we go to men they deal with us as the Eccho with the voice, cut off half of our petition; but when we go to God, the crop of mercy which we reap, is far greater then the seed of prayer which we sow.

verse 15.

2. Look backward to that which was a ground of his prayer, namely the promise which God made (when he appeared) to him. Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee untill I have done that which I have spoken to thee: so that indeed his prayer is nothing else but a repetition of that promise.

Quest.

It may here be enquired, what need Jacob trouble himself to pray for that which God had already promised? his word being passed the performance is sure; to what end should

Should Jacob pray? one would think that this should argue some diffidence in Jacob, nay forgetfulness in God, as if he needed to be put in mind of his word; and God might have retorted upon Jacob, *why do you trouble me to ask what I have already granted?*

But for answer hereunto; know,

Ans.

1. That it hath been the usuall practise of Gods servants to pray to him for those things which he hath already promised; not onely Jacob, but Abraham his Grand-father, having received from God the promise of a Son, intreats the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. All the Saints of the Old Testament prayed for the Messiahs first coming, and we now pray for his second coming, though yet both of these are clearly promised in holy Writ.

Gen. 25. 21.

2. This practise of Gods servants is founded upon very good reason; For

1. The prayer of the upright (according to Solomons Proverb) is Gods delight: Christ saith unto his Spouse, *Let me heare thy voice*, which then makes the best Musick in his eares, when it is the *eccho* of his own voice. Men love not to be troubled with suitors, but God is well-pleased with frequent addresses, yea therefore he defers to fulfill what he hath promised, that we may be the more importunate in desiring it.

Cant. 2. 14.

2. Divine promises are so far from being impediments, that they are encouragements to prayer: If I know that he to whom I petition is well-affected towards me, and well-pleased with what I desire of him, it cannot but embolden me to go to him; what are the promises, but declarations of Gods good will towards us, and what he is ready to do for us: and therefore we are justly animated to go boldly to the throne of grace.

3. More

Gen. 32. 10.

3. More then this, the *promises* are not onely *incouragements* to, but *arguments* in *prayer*. It is a *sufficient* argument to prevaile with any *honest* man, that *his word* is *past*, much more with the *faithfull* God. Accordingly this *holy* man *urgeth* upon *God* in that *prayer* he made when he was *returning* home, *thou saidest thou wouldst do me good*; with which that of *David* agreeth, *deal well with thy servant according to thy word*: and therefore instead of *desisting* from *prayer*, because of a *promise*, we should rather *plead* the *promise* in our *prayer*.

Ezek. 36. 37.

4. Yet further, *prayer* is the *condition* and *means* of obtaining what *God* hath *promised*. After a catalogue of many *sweet promises* made by *God* to his *people*, it followeth, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them*. As *Repentance* is the *condition* (if not *alwaies* expressed yet *implied*) of *avoiding* what he hath *threatned*. so is *prayer* of obtaining what he hath *promised*: and as the *space* between the *denouncing* and *executing* of the *menace* is the *time* for the *practice* of *repentance*, that the *evil* *threatned* may not be *inflicted*; so the *space* between the *making* and *accomplishing* of the *promise*, is the *time* for the *exercise* of *prayer*, that the *good* *promised* may be *performed*. The *promises* are as it were a *store-house* of *blessings*, but *prayer* is the *key* that opens it; they are as it were the *well* of *comforts*, but *prayer* is the *bucket* which must draw out the *water*.

5. Adde to all this that which may fully *satisfie*, *Not onely* is *prayer* as an *antecedent* condition to the *performing* of a *promise*, but a *promise* must *antecede* to the *making* of a *prayer*: so far should we be from *neglecting* *prayer* because *God* hath *promised*, that onely what *God* hath *promised* ought to be *prayed* for; *S. John* is expresse, *If we ask*

ask according to his will he heareth us; intimating that no prayer can have audience and acceptance, but what is according to his will; which will is revealed in his word, and (as to the things which we are to desire) particularly in his promises. Among the many requisites to an effectual prayer, faith is not the least; *Indignus esse divina benedictione censetur, qui Dominum dubio quaerit affectu*, saith S. Ambrose, he that asketh doubtingly begs a denial: *Matth. 21.22. Ambrose.* whatsoever you ask believing (saith our Saviour) you shall receive; and accordingly S. James is express, *James 1. 5, 6* if any of you lack wisdom, let him aske of God, but let him ask in faith; now the choice prop of faith is the promise, for though we believe God is able, yet we cannot believe he is willing to grant our desires unless we have a promise to declare it. Since then the rule of our prayer is Gods will, and that will is revealed in the promises; Yea since the promise is a choice ground of faith, and faith is a necessary ingredient into prayer, it manifestly followeth, that we cannot make an acceptable prayer to God, unless it be founded upon faith in a promise, and so according to Gods will. Let it therefore be our care to study the promises, that we may be acquainted with them, have recourse to them, and make use of them, so as by them not to be hindered from, but rather encouraged to, and quickned in our devotion; for so it was with Jacob, whom we find upon the receipt of a gracious promise putting up a fervent prayer.

But now methinks I heare some saying, we are convinced that a promise is an inducement, not onely to thankfulness, but prayer; and had we such a promise as Jacob had, we could pray both confidently and fervently. But God hath no where said to us, that he will be with us in our journeys, to keep us and provide

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for:

for us, and bring us home again ; and therefore how can we hope and pray for those blessings :

Ans<sup>r</sup>.

To remove this doubt, be pleased to know, that  
 1. *The promises which are made to particular persons in Scripture, so far as they are of general concernment, belong to all the servants of God.* It is very observable that the promise which God made to *Foshuah*, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, is not onely repeated but applied by *S. Paul* to all *Christians*, for otherwise the argument had been very weak ; Let your Conversation (writing to the *Hebrews*) be without covetousness, for he hath said, (namely, to *Foshuah*) *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*. Thus, what God said to *Jacob*, he saith unto every one of his servants when we go forth by sea or land. Indeed he saith it not so expressly, particularly, positively to us, as he did to *Jacob* ; therefore it is that, whereas *Jacob* having received such a punctual promise from God, might assure himself that nothing should hinder his return home, we may not be so confident ; he that goeth out in the morning, though but for a day, cannot be sure that he shall come again to his house in the evening, since he doth not know what God hath appointed to befall him. But yet withall, he that goeth forth (as here *Jacob* did) for many years, may upon this very promise made to *Jacob*, so far assure himself, that God will be with him, and if he see it fit for him (as he did for *Jacob*) he will so keep him and provide for him, that he shall come again to his fathers house in peace : And what man, unless he think himself wiser than God, would desire it upon other terms ?

2. *God hath been pleased to vouchsafe many promises of protection and provision to his servants in generall ; which among other places you may meet with*



with in the 34. 91. and 121. *Psalms*, where it would be observed, that though the *promises* are made to all the godly, yet some of them run in the singular number, *Thee* and *Thy*; He shall cover thee with his feathers, he shall give his Angels charge over thee; the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore. And why this? but that every servant of God in particular might take those words as spoken to him, and in all dangers might apply them to himself for the strengthening of his faith, and the quickening of his devotion.

*Psal.* 91. 4, 11.  
121. 8.

I shall wind up this with these following directions:

1. Be sure the way wherein thou goest be Gods way, that is, such a way for which thou hast either his command that thou shalt, or at least his warrant that thou maist go in it. It is very observable, how the Devil quoting that Scripture, He shall give his Angels charge over thee, mangles it, leaving out those words, to keep thee in all thy wayes. Upon which *Mellernus* his gloss is very apposite, *In omnibus viis tuis*, i.e. In vocations tuâ, In all thy ways, that is, in thy calling wherein God hath placed thee, in which alone thou mayst expect Angelical and Divine protection. For a Rebel who goeth forth to fight against his lawful Sovereign, a Thief, a Pirate, who lieth in wait to rob and spoil men of their goods and lives, to pray that God would be with him, and keep him in the way that he goeth, were not a petition, but a presumption: for though it be true, that Almighty God do sometimes suffer (for reasons best known to himself) such wretches to prosper in their wicked wayes, yet they cannot either justly expect, or religiously desire it; and by how much the more devoutly they seem to undertake such attempts, by so much the more abominable they are in

*Mat.* 4. 6.  
*Moller.* in  
P. 91.

the eyes of God, who never more abhorreth Robbery and Rebellion, then when it is masked with Religion and devotion. Let every one therefore, who hopeth and craveth Gods blessing, be carefull that he have Gods call; nor let him think it sufficient that Gods providence seemeth as it were to open a door, unlesse Gods word warrant him to go forth.

2. Be careful together with thy prayer to God to joyn thine own endeavour. God will be with us, but then we must not be wanting to our selves; He will give us bread to eat and rayment to put on without our merit, but not (if we be able) without our labour. He will keep us in the way we go, and that so as we may come again in peace; but then we must not needlessly thrust our selves into danger, and use the best means we can to preserve our selves. In vaine doth that scholar think to get learning who neglects his book; or that husband-man look for an harvest who throwes his plough into the hedge. Jacob was faine to serve Laban for that bread and rayment which he desired God to give him. God can keep us by a miracle without means; he hath done so, where means have been wanting, but he hath no where said he will do it, whilest means is afforded. *Oculus ad cælum, manus ad clavum*, is the Pilots practice, as his eye is upon the star, so his hand is upon the helm; Orare is to little purpose without Laborare: in all dangers; as thou liftest up thy eyes to God for his succour, so thou must put forth thy hand to the means of self-preservation.

3. Before thou goest on thy way take thy farewell of thy sins by Godly sorrow and repentance: your iniquities (saith God by the Prophet) have separated between me and you. If any sin unrepented go with us, God will leave us; and if iniquity be found in our hands, we cannot expect that  
his

his protection should be over our heads. I wonder not if Israel turn their backs before their enemies whilst the accursed thing is in the Camp. They are Gods own words, I will not be with you any more, except you destroy the accursed from among you. Joth. 7. 12;

4. Resign thy self to God as by a voluntary submission to his dispose, so by a willing subjection to his commands. He taketh none to be of his charge, whom he finds not to be of his family. This of Jacob, If God will be with me, and keep me in that way which I goe, &c. then the Lord shall be my God, may well be inverted, If the Lord be thy God, then he will be with thee, and keep thee in thy way, &c. It is a false Maxime on the one hand, that onely actnall protection obligeth to subjection; I am bound to obey my parents (whether civill or naturall) though they be not able to protect me; and much more my God, though he will not preserve me. But on the other hand, Subjection onely is that which entitleth us to protection; so that unlesse I serve and honour God, I do in vaine expect that he should blesse and keep me.

5. Finally, Begin, continue, and manage thy whole journey with frequent and zealous prayers to God for these blessings. Nor will it be amisse, nay I would commend it as a very fitting preparative to all weighty undertakings, that thou before hand engage thy self to God, (after Jacobs pattern) by a vow of some eminent service to be performed in case he be pleased to give thee the successe desired, and beseech him that he would prove and try thee whether thou wilt not faithfully make good the obligation thou hast made to him.

Having observed these rules, go forth (in Gods name) cheerfully, courageously, confidently, expecting divine presence and providence to accompany thee: And whereas, because

because the generall promises of temporall blessings in Scripture are made, *cum exceptione crucis* (as Divines speak) with the exception of the Crosse; things may not altogether succeed according to thy desires, yea it may so fall out that not onely troubles but death it self may befall thee in the way which thou goest: let this be thy strong consolation, that if thy life be at an end before thy way; it is that which thy gracious God seeth best for thee, and if he do not so keep thee as that thou shalt come again in peace to thy Fathers house on Earth; it is that thou mayest so much the sooner go to thy Fathers house in Heaven, where are many mansions, and wherethou shalt be in rest, peace, and blisse to all eternity.

John. 14. 2.

And thus I have at length brought you through all the parts of my text, and should now put an end to my discourse, but that I have a worthy person in mine eye, whose lately intended voyage is the occasion of this discourse, and to whom in a few words I must crave leave to make a particular addresse.

It hath pleased Divine providence to call you forth, from your friends and Fathers house: The way you are to go is long, to the remote parts of the world, and in that respect may seem tedious; your passage is by Sea, and that may prove perillous; the dangers of the Sea being probably more and greater then those of the land: But withall, your employment is not onely lawfull, but laudable, just, but honourable; you are intrusted with the goods, and imployed for the good of many, in which respect you are likely to be *notoriè utilis*, a common good. Besides, (which is no small comfort) God hath provided for you a meet help, a loving yoke-fellow, to go with you, one whose society will recompense the absence of your other friends, and beguile the tediousness of the way, yea.

yea one who will help to bear a part with you as well in your trouble, as in your enjoyments.

Nothing now remaineth but to make sure that God may be with you in the way you are to go: in order to which the example of this holy Patriarch is well worthy your imitation; as he did, so do you bind your self to God by some solemn vow at your going forth, to do some extraordinary act of piety, of charity, at your coming home; and not onely so, but while it is called to day, consecrate your self to his service; throughout the whole time of your voyage walk with him, cleave to him, ever remembering that of Azariah to Asa, *The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.* 2 Chr. 15. 2. Nor let this onely be your personall care, but what lieth in you take care that those who are under you may serve the Lord, so as the glorious name of God and Christ may not be blasphemed among the Indians by the prophane, intemperate and unclean lives of English Christians. Thus doing, doubt not of the hand of God upon you for good, & for your greater encouragement cal to mind former experiences, remember how God hath been with you and kept you in this very way that you are now to go, so that you came again to your Fathers house in peace; his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor is he less willing to keep you now, if you keep close to him.

I shall end my hortatory consolation to you with an intercessory supplication to God for you, for your Dear Comfort, and all that goe along with you. Nor do I doubt but all your friends here present will joyn with me; nor shall we onely now but continually make mention of you in our prayers; and by the way it may be a comfort to you when you are upon the tempestuous Sea, and in that

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*Barbarous land, that you have a Stock of prayers in England going for you.*

And now, what better, fitter, fuller prayer can be made for you by us or by your self, then that which here in effect *Jacob* maketh for himself? That *God Almighty* would vouchsafe to be with you and keep you in the way which you go, and at last bring you again to your fathers house in peace, so as your friends who now part from you mournfully, may then meet you joyfully, and our prayers may be turned into praises and songs of deliverance. Finally, not onely that you may come to your Native Country in peace, but, that when you come again, you may find it in peace, the breaches of Church and State healed, every one enjoying his rights in quiet, sitting under his own fig-tree, and eating the fruit of his labours with joy and thankfulness: and let all that wish well to you, to the Church, to the Land, say *Amen, Amen.*

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*FINIS.*

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